

## XMAS BONUS

Here you go boys  
he said as he handed  
us each a cellophane  
covered basket with  
little individually  
wrapped pieces of  
artificial cheese  
and some hard fruit.

At quitting time  
everybody on the crew  
carted their holiday  
booty with them to  
the freight elevator  
and out onto the  
street.

An old wino I  
recognized came  
up to hit us  
for some spare  
change. "Here man,  
merry christmas,"  
the first guy said,  
while handing him  
his basket.

## UNIVERSAL PHRASE

Saturday morning  
I heard commotion  
outside my window.

He had packed up  
all his stuff and  
she stood behind  
an imaginary line  
some 8 or 10 feet  
from the pickup.

"Jimmy," she said,  
"Please don't do this."  
He backed the truck  
into the street,  
made it to the corner,  
and pulled away.

She ran back to  
the apartment with  
her arms swinging  
stiffly at her sides,  
holding the cuffs  
of her sweater sleeves  
in her  
clinched fingers.

-- Daryl Rogers

Lexington KY

## THE BIG THINGS

Kit makes people nervous  
when they tell her  
a religious education  
is good for kids,  
and she asks, "Why?"  
Local people are concerned  
an "adult" bookstore  
might open in town,  
but Kit says, "So what?"  
But she didn't ask why  
an ex-student of mine  
was beaten so badly  
he was brain dead



when they found him  
in an alley  
the next morning.  
Kit didn't ask why  
the husband  
of our daughter's babysitter  
had a massive heart attack  
when he was staking the tomatoes  
in his backyard.  
Kit didn't say so what  
when a friend in Connecticut  
told us he was operated on  
for cancer of the lower jaw.  
Kit never asks why  
the big things happen.  
She knows.

#### THE DISSATISFIED

My wife and I  
seem to meet women  
who want to leave  
their husbands  
everywhere we go.  
Most of them  
are in their late thirties  
or early forties,  
and you know  
most of them will never go  
anywhere.  
The women who tell us  
they're unhappy  
are always strangers.  
Maybe it's easy  
to tell your troubles  
to someone  
you'll never see again.  
Last week we met  
two women who said,  
"I'd like to go,"  
and they both worked  
in the mall.  
One of them said something  
about her four kids  
and how tired she was;  
she'd never imagined  
her life would turn out  
the way it had.  
None of them  
seemed to imagine  
their lives would be  
so drab. So sad.